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**THE MAINE SENATE**  
132nd Legislature

*Testimony of Senator Nicole Grohoski in support of*  
**LD 1106, An Act to Provide Funds for the Redevelopment of the Island  
Nursing Home in Hancock County into Affordable Senior Housing**

*Before the Committee on Housing and Economic Development*

April 1, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee. I am Senator Nicole Grohoski, and I represent District 7, the majority of Hancock County – including the towns of Deer Isle and Stonington. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1106, “An Act to Provide Funds for the Redevelopment of the Island Nursing Home in Hancock County into Affordable Senior Housing.”

This bill provides a one-time appropriation of \$250,000 to support the conversion of the now-closed Island Nursing Home in Deer Isle into 24 affordable apartments for senior citizens. It represents a direct and targeted investment to address a critical shortage of senior housing in a region deeply affected by the loss of long-term care facilities. In addition to this appropriation, the bill ensures transparency and accountability by requiring the Maine State Housing Authority to submit a detailed progress and financial report within six months of receiving the funds.

This is a smart and strategic investment. As you well know, the cost of constructing a single unit of housing can often run well above \$250,000 per unit. Yet through this initiative, the state is being asked to contribute just over \$11,000 per unit—a fraction of what it would otherwise cost—thanks to the leveraging of additional funds and the commitment of the community. That’s a phenomenal deal for Maine taxpayers and an opportunity we should not pass up.

This effort also highlights the strength and resilience of the local community. The board of the Island Nursing Home has stepped up with a compelling vision, and they’ve brought in outside investment and momentum. While we continue working toward restoring long-term care infrastructure across Maine—and I remain committed to bringing nursing home care back to Hancock County—we must also act now to support intermediate solutions for older residents.

Currently, in my district, there are very few housing options for seniors who wish to downsize and age in place. This creates a bottleneck in our housing system—seniors are remaining in

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homes that could otherwise support growing families, simply because there are no suitable alternatives nearby. By providing smaller, affordable units for seniors, this bill helps free up family-sized homes and strengthens the entire housing ecosystem.

The need is immediate, and a solution is right in front of us. The Island Nursing Home facility is vacant but structurally sound. With funding, this building can be quickly adapted to meet the needs of older adults in the region. It allows people to stay in their community—a community they've contributed to, and where they want to remain as they age.

This is not just about bricks and mortar. It's about honoring our seniors with the dignity of a safe, affordable home in the place they know and love. It's about turning a loss—the closure of a beloved facility, the Island Nursing Home—into a lasting resource.

I urge you to support this bill. It's a modest fiscal request with an outsized return in value and human impact. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.